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Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired  
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Good Morning

Thank you for this opportunity to address you this morning, I understand Governor Malloy has some very difficult decisions to make as well as the Connecticut Legislators.

The Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) is the first commission established in the United States to serve individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired bridges the communication gap between consumers and services for all State Agencies.

DCF investigations  
Judicial court hearings  
DMHAS- inpatient rehab  
DMV- driving tests  
CHRO- hearing

It is a vibrant agency which provides critical services to the citizens in CT who are deaf and hard of hearing and to the entire business community in Connecticut.

The 43 part time interpreters provide 30,000 hours of interpreting services each year providing interpreters to 16,000 appointments. These are critical to the health and safety of all individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. Interpreting services are available for police and hospitals 24 hours a day.

Counseling services are imperative to the individuals seeking support. Recipients can feel comforted knowing there are no communication barriers or other obstacles to becoming well.

CDHI provides registration of all Sign Language/Oral Interpreters working in the State of Connecticut. This registration insures that each person has proper credentials to work in the State of Connecticut.

Over the past 10 years the Commission has confronted many reductions in funding. In 2001 the agency's budget was \$1,151,648.00. In 2011 our budget before hold back is \$904,012 approximately 250,000 less than ten years ago. The Governor's proposed budget for 2012 is \$810,364.00. There is no where else to reduce expense.

CDHI can no longer operate with fewer funds; there are 5 positions funded by the General fund and 2 positions funded by block grant funding. It is imperative that services remain in tack. My hope is that the Commission can be combined with another Department, it just can't go away.

In Governor Malloy's proposal all services will remain in tack, clients will be able to receive the support services they need to live independent productive lives. My staff and I will work to make the transition efficient without impacting services. The clients will not be negatively impacted.

Important to keep in mind:

- Important to think about location – on bus route
- Access to video phone technology, which CDHI has had for 5 years and other agencies have not been able to install this equipment yet.
- CDHI Advisory Board, the voice of the community.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.